



***Substitute House Bill No. 6873***

***Public Act No. 15-128***

***AN ACT CONCERNING INJURED VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS  
AND SICK LEAVE BENEFITS.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. Section 5-249 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2015*):

(a) Any state employee who is an active volunteer firefighter or member of a volunteer ambulance service or company (1) may, with the authorization of such employee's appointing authority, be permitted to leave work in order to respond to fire calls or ambulance calls during such employee's regular hours of employment without loss of pay, vacation time, sick leave or earned overtime accumulation, or (2) shall be permitted to respond to such calls prior to reporting for work without such prior authorization and without loss of pay, vacation time, sick leave or earned overtime accumulation, provided in either case, if requested by such employee's appointing authority, such employee submits a written statement from the chief of the volunteer fire department or the medical director or chief administrator of the volunteer ambulance service or company verifying that such employee responded to a fire or ambulance call and specifying the date, time and duration of such response.

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(b) Any state employee who is a certified disaster service volunteer of the American Red Cross may, with the authorization of such employee's supervisor, be granted a leave not to exceed fifteen working days in each year to participate in specialized disaster relief services for the American Red Cross, upon the request of the American Red Cross, without loss of pay, vacation time, sick leave or earned overtime accumulation.

(c) Any state employee who is an active volunteer firefighter or member of a volunteer ambulance service or company may, with the authorization of such employee's appointing authority, be allowed to attend training sessions or drills during such employee's regular hours of employment without loss of pay, overtime accumulation or sick leave.

(d) Any state employee who is an active member of a volunteer canine search and rescue team (1) may, with the authorization of such employee's supervisor, be permitted to leave work in order to respond to search or rescue calls during such employee's regular hours of employment without loss of pay, vacation time, sick leave or earned overtime accumulation, or (2) shall be permitted to respond to such calls prior to reporting for work without such prior authorization and without loss of pay, vacation time, sick leave or earned overtime accumulation, provided in either case, if requested by such employee's supervisor, such employee submits a written statement from the chief of the police or fire department verifying that such employee responded to a search or rescue call and specifying the date, time and duration of such response. As used in this subsection, "volunteer canine search and rescue team" means an individual and a dog (A) appropriately trained and certified to engage in search and rescue operations by a nonprofit canine search and rescue organization that is a member of the National Association of Search and Rescue, or its successor organization, and (B) who jointly engage in such operations

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at the request of a police or fire department and provide services without compensation.

(e) Any state employee who is an active volunteer firefighter and is injured on or after January 1, 2014, while serving in his or her capacity as a volunteer firefighter, shall be permitted to collect sick leave with pay for such injury pursuant to section 5-247, provided (1) such employee is eligible to receive such sick leave pay pursuant to the provisions of said section, (2) if requested by such employee's appointing authority, such employee submits a written statement from the chief of the volunteer fire department that such employee was injured during a fire call and specifying the date, time and nature of such injury, and (3) the amount of weekly sick leave pay received for such injury plus any weekly workers' compensation wage replacement benefits received pursuant to section 7-314a or 7-314b for such injury shall not exceed the weekly workers' compensation wage replacement benefits such employee would have received had such employee been injured in the course of his or her employment as a state employee. A state employee's collection of sick leave pursuant to this subsection shall not affect the seniority or accrual of pension benefits of such state employee. The provisions of this subsection shall not be construed to preempt or override the terms of any collective bargaining agreement effective prior to July 1, 2015.

Approved June 23, 2015